

April 24, 1975

HATCH ACT REVISION SUPPORTED

HON. HERBERT E. HARRIS II

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 24, 1975

Mr. HARRIS. Mr. Speaker, at April 14 hearings on H.R. 3000 in northern Virginia, a panel of local members of the American Federation of Government Employees endorsed passage of this bill, legislation which would allow Federal and postal employees to more actively and voluntarily participated in politics as private citizens. The national vice president of the 14th district, Major H. Travis, headed the panel and was accompanied by Beatrice Osbia, president of the National Capital Area Department; Ronald Jones, Lynn Dusenberre, and Nathan Cohen. I would like to share Mr. Travis' statement with my colleagues:

STATEMENT OF MAJOR H. TRAVIS ON H.R. 3000

Our organization, the American Federation of Government Employees, appreciates the opportunity to appear before you to comment upon H.R. 3000, a bill to restore to Federal Civilian Employees their rights to participate, as freely as all others in the political life of the nation, to protect Federal Civilian employees from improper political solicitation, and for other purposes.

I am Major H. Travis, National Vice President of the 14th District, American Federation of Government Employees, AFL-CIO. The 14th District contains 104 AFGE locals and represents upwards of 70,000 government employees in the Washington metropolitan area.

Along with me is Ms. Beatrice Osbia, President of the National Capital Area Department, which is a Council of locals in the 14th District which constitutes representation of over 60% of all the locals in the District.

On behalf of the government employees of this organization in the Washington Metropolitan Area, I heartily endorse the enactment of H.R. 3000 to restore our political rights and privileges as first class citizens.

For far too long we, as government employees, have had our political rights shackled as though chained in denial of our rightful privilege to exercise our personal political options of discretion.

Some people have said that few Federal employees desire more rights to political action. I can tell you this is a wrong conclusion.

All the delegates to our last Convention, in Boston in 1974, voted unanimously in favor of these kinds of changes in the Hatch Act which H.R. 3000 proposes.

Yet, not all of those who voted in the anonymity of that Convention, would sign their names. Why? Fear of reprisal. Many are afraid that someone will even consider that vote at our Convention as itself a violation of the Hatch Act—even though you and I know it is not.

But the fear is there. Federal employees must be freed of that fear. H.R. 3000 would liberate them and make them feel free to enjoy fully their rights of citizenship.

Today we see even many non-citizens, some legally admitted residents, some even just visitors, who participate in many forms in local and state political campaigns while Federal employees are afraid to do so. Isn't that a terrible thing to view? Isn't this a sorry state of affairs?

For too long we have had to sit back and see political figures nominated and then

elected into office whom we know to be unqualified and we were unable to do anything about it except cast a vote for the opponent who may be almost as unqualified. If privileged with the ability to form a campaign committee or campaign (as all other citizens) we could have prompted the nomination of candidates in both parties who would have been far more qualified to solve the many problems of our city, state, yes, and even Nation.

In this regard, we could have formed a campaign committee to participate at the grass roots, in the primaries. We could have raised the level of the debate, focused on deep problems as well as given financial contributions to the type candidate who was one of us, at least in spirit; and we might even have had one of us become a candidate for an office fully qualified in knowledge and ability far above those now running.

For too long we have had to stand silent under these adverse conditions, helpless to initiate any actions to combat these unfortunate conditions.

That in itself constitutes our eagerness and enthusiasm in the opportunity to stand before you tonight on behalf of the over 70,000 government employees represented in this District and state with all the emphasis at my command that, "We support wholeheartedly H.R. 3000 which will give us another deserved right as a first class citizen of this great country of ours."

Should there be any other action that we can initiate to further assure the passage of this legislation, rest assured that every ounce of energy possible to muster at our disposal will be fully utilized in its accomplishment.

That represents our resolve.

Now I should like to submit specific recommendations for possible changes in your Bill, H.R. 3000.

Rather than have the Civil Service Commission adjudicate violations of H.R. 3000, when enacted, we would prefer an alternative body.

The reason for this is that we are deeply concerned that Government employees who will enjoy full participation in the political life of the nation must also be given full protection from any recrimination and retaliation that may result from such participation. We fear this may not happen if the Civil Service Commission is involved.

We recommend that specific mandated safeguards be included in the administration of any law resulting from H.R. 3000. Elements regarding the administration of such law should include:

1. Assurance that the law will be administered in an objective and non-political manner. To achieve this goal, a governing body to set policy and control the overall administration of the law must be kept out of the realm of partisan politics. One method to achieve this goal would be to establish a prestigious independent Political Rights Commission. This Commission should have the bulk of its members selected from outside the Federal Government. Federal employees should be adequately represented on the commission through their unions. The commission should have a small permanent staff.

2. A specific mandate should be designated in H.R. 3000 for the staffing pattern, number, and location of the unit that will administer the law. The unit should be attached to an ongoing agency for administrative purposes only, probably in the Department of Justice with which it should maintain close liaison if prosecutions are needed. The unit should be held accountable only to the Political Rights Commission.

3. H.R. 3000 should provide initially sufficient authorization of funds to administer the law at a responsible level. The appropriations should be kept at authorized levels.

Because politics has become such a pervasive force in Federal government staffing and administration of programs in recent years, we believe that an independent Political Rights Commission with close ties to the Department of Justice offers the best possibility of obtaining a non-political administration of the law and thereby providing maximum protection to Federal employees who may wish to participate fully in the political process of this country.

Before closing, I should like to state that we endorse, of course, the statement made to your committee by the National headquarters of the American Federation of Government Employees. We are very happy that, in this case, you have gone directly also to the grass roots to obtain the views of employees and their representatives at the local level. We would like to be able to say that we have hundreds of affidavits showing that almost 100 percent of the Federal employees want to have the Hatch Act amended. But, as I mentioned earlier, there is a great fear to sign their names. At a convention, when there is no recorded roll call vote, everybody expresses his or her real feeling. But left alone, when the signature may be held against you one day by an inquisitorial administration, that is another matter.

There is only one way to lift this fear—amend the Hatch Act along the lines which you have indicated in H.R. 3000.

I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you with my colleagues and associates in the American Federation of Government Employees. As I said earlier, we will do everything possible to help you enact H.R. 3000 into law. And, finally, we thank you for your Hearing and the invitation you extended to us.

MEET CONGRESSMAN GEORGE E. DANIELSON

HON. GLENN M. ANDERSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 24, 1975

Mr. ANDERSON of California. Mr. Speaker, a recent issue of the Los Angeles Times carried a feature story which I think does an excellent job of describing our colleague, the Honorable GEORGE E. DANIELSON. It was written by Times reporter Paul Houston, and I would like to insert this article into the Record so that all of the Members can have an opportunity to get to know GEORGE a little better:

REPRESENTATIVE DANIELSON: "THIS IS THE REAL WORLD"

(By Paul Houston)

WASHINGTON.—Looking back on the House impeachment inquiry, which raised him from obscurity to national recognition, Rep. George E. Danielson (D-Calif.) finds that those sobering, burdensome, yet heady days are having a lasting impact on him.

"When I got into impeachment," Danielson reminisced the other day while fighting off a cold, "I let all of the standard political considerations go."

"Whether I was going to be reelected or defeated last November made no difference—although happily I got the biggest vote I ever got (after supporting the impeachment of President Nixon). I was just absolutely going to do the best job I could."

"Well, that has rubbed off a bit. I don't know how long I'll be in Congress, but I know that on any important issue I'm going to take the same attitude. It's one on which

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CONGRESSIONAL RECORD—Extensions of Remarks

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side of Manhattan. In its 5 years it has maintained a standard of journalistic excellence which makes it one of the most widely read and quoted weeklies in the entire city.

Our Town has built its record on the strength of its objective reporting and an outstanding record of service to the community. Our Town has reported numerous community problems and presented them in a responsible fashion so that the appropriate public officials have responded to them, thus helping to improve the quality of life for their readers.

Yet the heart of any newspaper credibility and success lies with their editorials. Our Town and their excellent managing editor, Ed Kayatt, have consistently presented responsible and timely editorials on subjects of importance, and the community they serve look to Our Town for a clear presentation and understanding of the main local issues of the day.

America has been described as a nation of neighborhoods. The daily and weekly papers serving the various neighborhoods are an integral part of community life. Our Town is one of the finest examples of a responsible and effective local newspaper and their wide circulation is a tribute to their efforts. I know the special importance of the neighborhood newspaper in New York City. In many cities their main newspaper serves all communities. Yet New York is a news center onto itself and it is the neighborhood newspaper which must provide citizens with information on important matters of largely local concerns.

Mr. Speaker, this Nation has grown strong partly because of a strong, free, and viable press. Our Town in its 5-year career has proven itself to be an exemplary member of the journalistic community. They have earned the respect and the loyalty of their readers and deserve the congratulations of all New Yorkers. I wish them continued success as they work to complete one decade of service to the people of the city of New York.

WE'LL MISS EDITH VANOCUR, A
GREAT WOMAN

HON. RICHARD L. OTTINGER
OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Thursday, April 24, 1975

Mr. OTTINGER. Mr. Speaker, I am sad to inform the House of the passing of Edith Vanocur, a great woman. My family and I had the privilege of being her friend.

Edith was a lady of extraordinary richness of interest, life, and spirit. She had great perception about our American culture and the drift of American politics. Through her extensive contacts with the Nation's leaders, she had no hesitation about giving her views and the benefit of her insights. Perhaps because she came from a different culture and lived through the horrors of the Nazi takeover in Germany and Austria

as a child, she was able to see our society clearer than many of us could see ourselves.

Her spirit was most manifest during her last days, when knowing she was dying of cancer, she carried on indomitably, putting us at comfort rather than permitting us to comfort her.

Her friends will miss her. America will miss her. We are all enriched by having been her friend.

Mr. Speaker, I am inserting the very excellent obituary by Marian Burros in the Washington Post of April 15, 1975, at this point in the RECORD:

[From the Washington Post, Apr. 15, 1975]
EDITH C. VANOCUR DIES; FOOD COLUMNIST,
COOKBOOK AUTHOR
(By Marian Burros)

Edith C. Vanocur, 51, cookbook author and food columnist for The Washington Post until illness limited her activities, died Monday at the National Cancer Institute in Bethesda after a long illness.

Mrs. Vanocur, a native of Vienna, was sent to England at the age of 15, after the Nazi takeover of Austria. She served in the British armed forces during World War II.

After the war, she became a successful fashion designer for Butterick Patterns in London. It was there that she married Sander Vanocur at the time a reporter with the New York Times.

According to a newspaper article written when Mrs. Vanocur came to Washington in 1957, she was capable of producing "recipes with the same ease as she designs clothes, and with the same spectacular results."

A professional colleague described her interest in food as "contagious," and said, "She possessed a European appreciation of food for its own sake, and a joy in sharing it with others. She was a wonderful cook."

David Brinkley, the NBC newscaster, said, "She probably was the best cook in town."

Referring to Mrs. Vanocur's life as a refugee, Brinkley, who was a colleague of her husband when Vanocur worked at NBC, said: "Her early years were so tough that when her good years came along, it's too bad they were so short."

She and her husband lived at 3155 Highland Pl. NW, with their two sons, Nicholas and Christopher. Their rambling old Cleveland Park house was decorated, according to friends, with the same eclectic creativity she brought to cooking and fashion designing.

She was coauthor of two cookbooks, "Hors d'Oeuvre" and "Booze," and had been working on another before she became ill. Several years ago she conducted cooking demonstrations on the "Today" show.

The family requests that expressions of sympathy be sent to the Sidwell Friends School.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

HON. GLADYS NOON SPELLMAN

OF MARYLAND
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Thursday, April 24, 1975

Mrs. SPELLMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am introducing legislation today that would amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 to encourage the preservation of historic buildings and structures and for the rehabilitation of other property.

Mr. Speaker, Maryland has one of the richest heritages in historic structures and sites in the Nation. Many of these have been well cared for by both

the private and the public sectors of our communities. However, some of our rare and valuable examples of historic architecture have been left to the elements and are fast disappearing by neglect. In the name of progress, irreplaceable historical resources in Maryland are being destroyed at an alarming rate. Those that remain must be preserved as a part of Maryland's heritage to be enjoyed by future generations. Such preservation is the mission of this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I feel that our current system of tax incentives discourages enlisting private funds in historic restoration projects. This legislation would make use of the positive aspects of our Federal tax system so as to preserve historically significant buildings, encourage the rehabilitation rather than the demolition of older buildings in our urban centers; and increase the development of additional open spaces for public use.

Specifically, the bill would amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 by limiting depreciation to the straight-line method in the case of buildings constructed on sites which were formerly occupied by demolished historic structures; permitting a taxpayer if he substantially rehabilitated depreciable property to elect to compute depreciation with respect to his pre-existing basis in the building as though the entire structure were first placed in service by him; and permitting a charitable contribution deduction for certain types of transfers which are not presently allowed under the law.

These suggested changes in the tax law are in no way intended to replace local and State governmental decisions related to the proper planning and regulation of land use. Nevertheless, over the long-term, the effect of moving toward equitable tax treatment of historic buildings should result in greater variety and character in the urban environment. It is my belief that more older structures should be retained and renovated. Downtown areas should provide a greater range in architecture as the ages of buildings will be more varied. Smaller older structures should be saved and used where before they might have been converted to parking lots. Residential areas with a high number of rental units should show greater numbers of rental units should show greater numbers of rehabilitated structures. Fewer structures should be abandoned and left to decay.

The historic preservation provisions are intended to provide to the taxpayers strong incentives to save those buildings and neighborhoods of such historical importance as to warrant a place on the National Register. It is estimated that as a result of these provisions increased expenditures will be made to restore and rehabilitate such structures, added efforts will be made to preserve them, and they will become desired structures that will be used and kept in good condition.

More and more Americans are becoming committed to the cause of historic preservation. I hope the 94th Congress will move expeditiously with this legislation designed to achieve that goal.

Battle Ahead Over House Revisions

Hatch Act Curbs Won't Die Easily

By William Taaffe

Washington Star Staff Writer

Despite passage by the House, the bill removing Hatch Act restrictions against political activity by federal civilian employees and postal workers faces possible hurdles in the Senate and the White House.

In a vote which even advocates of the bill described as surprisingly strong, the House yesterday approved a wholesale revision of the Hatch Act, 288-119. But the bill's chances during coming months remain unclear.

The measure, which would allow the nation's 2.8 million federal

civilian and postal workers to run for elective office and participate in partisan campaigns, now goes to the Senate Post Office and Civil Service Committee.

Committee Chairman Gale W. McGee, D-Wyo., was unavailable for comment yesterday. But an aide indicated that the bill will not get to the Senate floor for months — a delay that could affect its chances for passage, some House supporters feel.

A SPOKESMAN for President Ford said he is "opposed to the bill."

"We just think to have federal employees identified with partisan politics could subject them to undue

pressures" and jeopardize public trust in the impartiality of government, he said.

Rep. Herbert E. Harris, D-Va., a chief proponent of the bill, quoted a White House lobbyist by saying yesterday that a veto of the measure is "likely," despite the wide margin by which it passed the House.

The impact of any Hatch Act reforms would be substantial in the Washington area, where about 350,000 of the 2.8 million federal employees live. More than 100,000 residents of the District alone are "Hatched."

UNDER THE BILL, all federal workers — including 40,000 District employees covered by Civil Service Commission regulations — would be free to engage in political activity for the first time since the Hatch Act's passage in 1939.

Among Washington area House members, Harris and Rep. Gladys N. Spellman, D-Md., voted for the bill. Reps. Gilbert Gude, R-Md., Marjorie S. Holt, R-Md., and Joseph L. Fisher, D-Va., voted against.

Fisher, whose Northern Virginia district contains more federal employees than any except D.C., voted against the bill after the House rejected his attempt to sharply reduce the scope of the Hatch Act revisions.

FISHER'S AMENDMENT would have allowed civilian employees and postal workers to run for part-time elective offices at the state and local levels and to campaign for candidates for those offices. But it would have prohibited their political involvement at the federal level.

Harris and Rep. William Clay, D-Mo., chairman of the Post Office Committee, said the Fisher proviso would have gutted the bill. The House voted the amendment down 260-147.

The tally on final passage of the bill generally followed partisan lines. Only 26 of 289 Democrats and 49 of 145 Republicans bucked their party's positions.